

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EASTON INDUSTRIAL ACCESS ROAD STUDY

EASTON, PRESQUE ISLE, FORT FAIRFIELD

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

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Prepared Pursuant to 23 CFR 771 and 23 USC 138

by the

U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

and

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**Comments on this Environmental Assessment are due by April 12, 2002
and should be sent to either of the addresses above.**

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Terms

100-Year Floodplain – The portion of the floodplain submerged by the statistical flood event with a 1 percent probability of occurring in any year.

Adverse noise impact – A condition that exists if sound levels approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) or a 10-decibel (dBA) increase in ambient noise levels.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) – The major policy advisor to the Federal government in the field of historic preservation. The 20 members of the Council are appointed by the President and include the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Architect of the Capitol, the chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the president of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) – The total yearly traffic volume on a given roadway segment divided by the number of days in the year. AADT is expressed in vehicles per day (vpd).

Aquifer – Rock or sediment that is saturated with water and sufficiently permeable to transmit economically significant quantities of water to wells and springs.

Archaeological resources – Materials and objects that remain below the ground surface as evidence of the life and culture of historic, prehistoric, or ancient people, such as artifacts, structures, or settlements. Resources of concern are located in areas known or suspected to contain subsurface artifacts of pre-european or post-european settlement populations. Areas of expected moderate to high archaeological sensitivity according to various factors including present and past topography, exposure, slope, distance to water, and availability of food.

Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) – A federal agency that administers Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act; its regulatory programs address wetlands and waterways protection.

Arterials – Roads with high traffic volumes that provide linkage between major cities and towns and developed areas, capable of attracting travel over long distances. Basically, they provide service to interstate and intercounty travel demand. The arterial system typically provides for high travel speeds and the longest trip movements. The degree of access control on an arterial may range from full control (freeways) to entrance control on, for example, an urban arterial through a densely developed commercial area.

Attainment area – A geographic area in which levels of a criteria air pollutant meet the health-based primary standard (National Ambient Air Quality Standard) for the

pollutant. Attainment areas are defined using federal pollutant limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Auxiliary lane - An additional travel lane, typically used where steep grades make it difficult for trucks to maintain the posted speed limit (also known as a truck climbing lane).

Best Management Practice (BMP) – A structural and/or management practice employed before, during and after construction to protect receiving water quality. These practices either provide techniques to reduce soil erosion or remove sediment and pollutants from surface runoff.

Biodiversity –The diversity of genes, species, and ecosystems. This term includes the entire hierarchy of ecological organization, and encompasses regional ecosystem diversity (landscape diversity), local ecosystem diversity (community diversity), species diversity, and genetic diversity within populations of a species.

Carbon monoxide (CO) – A colorless, odorless, tasteless gas formed in large part by incomplete combustion of fuel. Full combustion activities (i.e. transportation, industrial processes, space heating, etc.) are the major sources of CO.

dBA –An abbreviation for A-weighted decibel. The decibel is a unit used to describe sound pressure levels on a logarithmic scale. For community noise impact assessment, an A-weighted frequency filter is used to approximate the way humans hear sound.

Deciduous – Refers to woody vegetation, such as oak or maple trees, that shed their leaves after the growing season.

Demand – Vehicular traffic demand (volume) on a given roadway segment, expressed in vehicles per day (vpd).

Demand shift – The change in demand (volume) on a given roadway segment, expressed in vehicles per day (vpd). Demand shifts can be caused by new corridors that provide a faster and/or shorter travel route.

Direct impacts – The immediate effects on the social, economic, and physical environment caused by the construction and operation of a roadway; these impacts are usually experienced within the right-of-way or in the immediate vicinity of the roadway or other element of the proposed action.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – The document prepared by FHWA in accordance with FHWA NEPA regulations (23 CFR Part 771.123). These regulations require that a DEIS evaluate all reasonable alternatives considered, discuss the reasons that alternatives have been eliminated from detailed study, summarize the studies, reviews, consultations, and coordination required by environmental laws and Executive Orders.

Endangered Species – Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Environmental Assessment – A public document prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that analyzes the environmental impacts of a proposed federal action and provides sufficient evidence to determine the level of impacts.

Environmental Justice – Executive Order 12898 requires each federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing... disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority populations and low-income populations.”

Eutrophication – Change in the biological and physical characteristics of a body of water due to increased nutrient input that results in increased productivity. Eutrophication may occur naturally or through man-induced changes in nutrient inputs.

Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) – A statute enacted in 1981 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure that significant agricultural lands be protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses. For highway projects receiving federal aid, the regulations promulgated under the FPPA (7 CFR Part 658, 1984) require a state highway authority (MDOT) to coordinate with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The FPPA regulates four types of farmland soils; prime farmland, unique farmland, farmland of state-wide importance, and farmland of local importance.

Farmland Soils – Soils suited to producing crops; those with soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce a sustainable yield when treated and managed using acceptable methods. Specifically, farmland soils are those soil types designated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – A federal agency that regulates federal actions in floodplains.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – The branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering the funding of federal-aid highway projects.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)- a public document that briefly presents the reasons why an action will not have a significant impact on the human environment, and therefore does not require the preparation of an EIS.

Floodplain – The level area adjoining a river channel inundated during periods of high flow.

Floodway – The channel of a stream, plus any adjacent floodplain areas, that must be kept free of encroachment in order that the 100-year flood be carried without substantial increases in flood heights.

Geographic Information System (GIS) – A computer-based application used to perform spatial analysis.

Grade – The slope of a road along the direction of travel, normally characterized by the vertical rise per unit of longitudinal distance.

GW-A – The highest groundwater classification in Maine. GW-A is applied to water suitable for direct human consumption without treatment.

Historic resources – Properties, structures and districts that are listed in or have been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Hydric soils – Soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop at least temporary conditions where there is no free oxygen in the soil around the roots. Hydric soils correspond to federally and state regulated wetlands in many circumstances.

Lacustrine – Of and related to lakes.

Land and Water Conservation Fund – A system for funding Federal, State and local parks and conservation areas, created by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964.

Link – A new or existing roadway segment between two defined end-points.

Labor Market Area (LMA) – LMAs are regional areas with a high concentration of employment opportunities. These are economically integrated units within which workers may readily change job without changing their place of residence.

Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA) – The Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act is a state law enacted in 1991 by the citizens of Maine that provides a decision making framework for examining a range of alternatives. The STPA is applicable to transportation planning decisions, capital investment decisions, and project selection decisions made by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Microscale analysis – An analysis of air for chemical constituents, typically conducted for a small study area such as an intersection.

Mitigation – Actions that avoid, minimize, or compensate for potential adverse impacts.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) – The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded during a specified time in a specified geographic area.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) – The federal legislation that requires an interdisciplinary approach in planning and decision-making for federal-aid actions. The Act includes requirements for the contents of environmental impact statements that are to accompany every recommendation for major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The interdisciplinary study approach includes the analysis of potential impacts to the natural, social and economic environment.

National Register of Historic Places – A list of structures, sites and districts of national historical significance as determined by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act.

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) – A program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for mapping and classifying wetland resources in the United States.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Formerly the Soil Conservation Service, NRCS is a department within the United State Department of Agriculture, that is responsible for administering the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Noise abatement criteria (NAC)– Noise levels measured in decibels that are used as a basis of comparison for evaluating the impact from predicted design year noise and for determining whether noise abatement measures should be considered.

Ozone – A gas which is a variety of oxygen. Ozone is a pollutant regulated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Ground-level ozone is the main component of smog. Ozone is not directly emitted by motor vehicles, but is formed when oxides of nitrogen react with sunlight.

Palustrine – The group of vegetated wetlands traditionally called by such names as marsh, swamp, bog, fen, and prairie. Palustrine wetlands may be situated shoreward of lakes, river channels, or estuaries; on river floodplains; in isolated catchments; or on slopes.

Palustrine Forested Wetland (PFO) – A palustrine wetland dominated by trees, commonly referred to as a swamp.

Palustrine Emergent Wetland (PEM) – A palustrine wetland dominated by herbaceous species, typically cattails, sedges and grasses, commonly referred to as a marsh.

Palustrine Scrub-Shrub Wetland (PSS) – A palustrine wetland dominated by shrubs.

Peak hour – The hour of the day when traffic volume on a given roadway is highest. A separate peak hour can be defined for morning and evening periods.

Peak Hour Leq – Represents the noisiest hour of the day/night and usually occurs during peak periods of motor vehicle traffic. The Leq is the equivalent sound level measurement, which means it averages background sound levels with short-term transient sound levels and provides a uniform method for comparing sound levels that vary over time.

PM10 - is particulate matter (PM) with a mass median aerodynamic diameter less than 10 micrometers (um). PM10 is one of seven air pollutants the EPA regulates under the NAAQS.

Receptor – Locations that may be affected by noise: sensitive receptors include residences, parks, schools, churches, libraries, hotels, and other public buildings.

Record of Decision (ROD) – The document, prepared by the Federal Highway Administration, that presents the basis for the Federal agency action, summarizes

any mitigation measures to be incorporated, and documents any required Section 4(f) approvals. No Federal agency action may be undertaken until a Record of Decision has been signed. A Record of Decision is prepared no sooner than 30 days after the public release of the FEIS.

Relocations – The displacement of a residence, business or other structure from a property owner, for public use, that requires the residents or business to be moved to an alternate location.

Riverine – Of and relating to rivers.

Rural – A rural community is defined as an area with: 1) a population less than 2,500 persons or; 2) a population between 2,500 and 6,000 persons and a worker-to-resident worker ratio less than 1.0.

Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) – The National Historic Preservation Act of 1996 (16 U.S.C. 470f), Section 106, requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C., Section 303) (Section 4(f)) – Legislation protecting publicly owned parks, public recreation areas, historic properties or wildlife and waterfowl refuges. The statute states that no Department of Transportation project may use land from these areas unless there is demonstrated to be no prudent and feasible alternative to using the land, and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from the use.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (Section 404) – The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) is the enabling legislation for protection of waters of the United States by the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Funds Act (Section 6(f)) – Legislation that provides for the public purchase and preservation of tracts of land.

Significant Sand and Gravel Aquifer – A porous formation of ice-contact and glacial outwash sand and gravel that contains significant removable quantities of water which is likely to provide drinking water supplies.

Significant Wildlife Habitat – Wildlife habitats, including deer wintering yards, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, seabird nesting habitat, and significant vernal pools, that are protected under 38 M.R.S.A. § 480-B.

Sole Source Aquifer (SSA) – An aquifer designated by EPA as the “sole or principal source” of drinking water for a given aquifer service area; that is, an aquifer that is needed to supply 50% or more of the drinking water for that area and for which there are no reasonably available alternative sources should the aquifer become contaminated.

State Implementation Plan (SIP) – A plan created under The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) that establishes emission reduction requirements for ozone

and carbon monoxide non-attainment areas. Proposed projects must demonstrate that the impacts of their emissions are consistent with the appropriate SIP.

Stormwater runoff – The portion of precipitation that flows toward stream channels, lakes, or other waterbodies as surface flow.

Surface Water Supply Watershed – The watershed that contributes to a public drinking water supply.

Threatened Species – Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – A federal agency responsible for administering programs that address farming issues

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – A federal agency responsible for administering programs that address environmental issues.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – A federal agency responsible for addressing the protection of fish and wildlife including rare, threatened, or endangered species. The USFWS plays an advisory role in the Section 404 regulatory program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Upgrade – A geometric improvement to an existing roadway segment.

Urban – An urban community is defined as an area with: 1) a population greater than 7,500 persons or; 2) a population between 2,500 and 7,500 persons and a worker-to-resident worker ratio greater than 1.0.

Vegetation cover type – A biological community characterized by certain vegetation characteristics, such as hardwood forest, mixed forest, shrub, herbaceous, and urban or residential managed vegetation.

Vehicle-Hours Traveled (VHT) – VHT is a measure of automobile use and trip time. One vehicle traveling one hour constitutes one vehicle-hour.

Vehicle-Miles Traveled (VMT) – VMT is a measure of automobile use and trip length. One vehicle traveling one mile constitutes one vehicle-mile.

Waterfowl Habitat – Wetlands that provide habitat for waterfowl (geese, brant, ducks) and that meet certain criteria for size, quality, and percent open water as established by Department of Inland Fish & Wildlife regulations.

Watershed – A region or area that contains all land ultimately draining to a water course, body of water, or aquifer.

Wetland – Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AADT – Annual Average Daily Traffic

ACOE – United States Army Corps of Engineers

ACTS – Aroostook County Transportation Study

ATR – Automated Traffic Recorder

BEA – Bureau of Economic Analysis

BMP – Best Management Practice

BTIP – Biennial Transportation Improvement Program

CAL3QHC – EPA’s Modeling Methodology for Predicting Pollutant Concentrations near Roadway Intersections

CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CO – Carbon monoxide

dBA – Loudness (sound pressure level) measured on a logarithmic scale in units of decibels (dB), using an A-weighted filter

DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

EA – Environmental Assessment

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

EPA –U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FONSI – Finding of No Significant Impact

FPPA – Farmland Protection Policy Act

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

ITS – Interconnecting Trail System

Leq – One-hour equivalent sound level

LMA – Labor Market Area

MDEP – Maine Department of Environmental Protection

MDIF&W – Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

MDOT – Maine Department of Transportation
MHPC – Maine Historic Preservation Commission
MNAP – Maine Natural Areas Program
MOBILE5b – Mobile Source Emission Factor Model
M.R.S.A. – Maine Revised Statutes Annotated
NAAQS – National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAC – Noise Abatement Criteria
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS – Nonpoint source
NRCS – Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRIMC – Natural Resource and Information Mapping Center
NRPA – Maine Natural Resources Protection Act
NWI – National Wetlands Inventory
OSHA – Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OGIS – Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems
PEM – Palustrine Emergent Wetland
PFO – Palustrine Forested Wetland
PM10 - particulate matter with a mass median aerodynamic diameter less than 10 micrometers (um).
ppm – parts per million
PSS – Palustrine Scrub-Shrub Wetland
ROD – Record Of Decision
SCS – Soil Conservation Service (now the NRCS)
SHPO – State Historic Preservation Officer
STPA – Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act
TNM – Traffic Noise Model
U.S.C. – United States Code
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS – United States Geological Survey
vpd – vehicles per day
VHT – Vehicle-Hours Traveled

VMT – Vehicle-Miles Traveled